Magical Realism and Lack of Authorial Reticence in
Gunter Grass’s *The Tin Drum*
with Reference to
Gabriel García Márquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

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Abstract
This article introduces some distinctive features of magical realism, namely *authorial reticence* and concept of *hesitation* to prove that despite wide advertisement, Gunter Grass's *The Tin Drum* cannot be categorized in this narrative mode.

The methodology employed is mainly based on *close reading, comparison* and *contrast* with Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, and provides examples or excerpts from both novels.

Furthermore, this article introduces and names two newly-discovered components of magical realism, namely *paucity* and *momentariness*, perceived out of Franz Roh’s famous statement regarding the palpitating nature of magic hidden behind our represented world.

Finally, it is inferred that not only Gunter Grass's *The Tin Drum* contradicts paucity and Momentariness, but also unlike Marquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude* that well retains authorial reticence, Grass's *The Tin Drum* opposes this element ostensibly, as the protagonist of the novel attempts to provide rational explanations and logical justifications for whatever he does.

**Keywords:** Magical realism, Authorial reticence, Sustained hesitation, Paucity, Momentariness.
Kasikhan

1. Introduction

It is widely and internationally advertised that a large group of novels including Gunter Grass's *The Tin Drum* fall in the category of magical realism. This claim is backed by some well-known references, such as M.H. Abrams' *A Glossary of Literary Terms* and other well-known sources.¹

The present article aims to present excerpts and examples supporting the opinion that Grass's *The Tin Drum*, in certain circumstances, directly moves against the definite principles of magical realism, and that in certain degrees, the novel approaches fantastic literature. Of course, regardless of the category for this literary masterpiece, one should confess that Grass's novel is great, considerable and thought-provoking per se, as it opens a new approach to discern German disaster during the Nazi period.

1.1. History of Magical Realism

The narrative mode of magical realism has been diversely approached at different times by different people: being an attitude, appearing as a style or sometimes, being presented as a mode indigenous to Latin American literature. Fervent and fiercely passionate people like Aljeo Capentier² have always attempted to monopolize this narrative mode merely for Latin American countries. Unlike Capentier, Lois Parkinson Zamora,³ and Wendy B. Faris⁴ believe in the internationality of this mode and emphasize that magical realism was mainly and drastically developed during the second half of the twentieth century around the world. They maintain that the literature of all countries is potentially capable to produce magical realistic works as long as they are compatible with the belief systems of that culture. The case-study of Susan J. Napier⁵ in Japan, and the flourishing of this literary narrative in almost all parts of the world, including Iran, North America, Africa...etc suffice to claim that this kind of narrative is free from being restricted to just one specific geographical location.

Magical realism and fantastic literature resemble each other in some perspectives; yet what makes the former distinct from the latter is the component of authorial reticence that fantasy lacks. In addition to this, the kind of reality shown in magical realism is drastically different from that depicted in conventional reality or presented in fantastic literature. Furthermore, the element of theme or the main idea is much more enriched and deeper in magical realism that aims to convey social messages to draw readers' attention to the undesirable realities kept intentionally hidden by despotic authorities.

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² Alejo Carpentier y Valmont (December 26, 1904 – April 24, 1980) Cuban novelist, essay writer, and musicologist.
³ Professor of English, History, and Art, University of Houston
⁴ Professor of English and Comparative Literature, University of Texas at Arlington
⁵ Professor Susan J. Napier, Harvard University
Due to the word *magic* used in magical realism, many people misunderstand and misconceive this literary mode and mistakenly regard it as fairy tales loaded by excessive application of charms, spells, sorcery and wizards. Amazingly, in this kind of fiction, *magic* and *reality* are not two distinct concepts, but one unified entity coexisting and emerging from the heart of each other. *Magic* in this sense, as Roh explains is the Magic of Being that “refers to an authentic rationalism which venerates as a miracle the world’s rational organization.” (qtd. in Guenther 1995, 34).

Some regard and identify magic with occult knowledge, wisdom and cognition merely conceivable to a particular group of people. Faris has defined magic as something that “grows almost imperceptibly out of the real...” (Faris 1995, 173), and that “the magical is part of the rational,” (Stewart 1995, 477) or, as Robert Gibb states, “in magical realism, the real isn't abandoned; it is extended.” (qtd. in Stewart, 477). Likewise, George McMurray believes that magical realism presents “an expanded sense of reality” (ibid.), and Wendy B. Faris speaks of magic growing indiscernibly out of the real.

The concept of *reality* as perceived by ordinary men is not as deep and extensive as it is in magical realism. It is one of the most unsettled and questionable entities, as any definition of the concept adduced by commentators depends on belief, outlook and insight prevalent in the community in which one lives. Reality in everyday usage implies everything that exists; whereas, reality discussed from a wider perspective, encompasses

> everything that *is*, whether or not it is observable, accessible or understandable by science, philosophy, theology or any other system of analysis. Reality in this sense may include both *being* and *nothingness*, whereas *existence* is often restricted to being. All that is perceived, those which can be communicated, and those which make up our thoughts.  

In contrast to conventional realism, reality in magical realism is not apprehended or felt through the five senses, nor is it necessarily among the phenomena we are familiar with.

The rise of magical realism began with the integration of Impressionism and Expressionism, two distinct painting schools. It was Franz Roh, the German art critic who first used the term in painting in 1925 and described this new art as magic realism which has roots in both. Since the narrative mode of magical realism is originally derived and inspired from a painting style, two forms of spelling have been distinguished: *magic realism* when there is a reference to the visual art of painting introduced in 1925 by Franz Roh, and *magical realism* when exclusively the narrative technique introduced in the 1940s is concerned. Definitely, the

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6 Franz Roh (February 21, 1890 - December 30, 1965), German historian, photographer, and art critic.
7 Robert Gibb RSA (28 October 1845 – 11 February 1932) Scottish painter
term *magic(al) realism* is an umbrella term when one discusses the whole artistic concept that encapsulates aspects of both *magic realism* and *magical realism*.

Artistically and literally speaking, magical realism is partly derived from Impressionism, as it portrays objects associated with this world, and is partly derived from Expressionism, as it brings new meanings to them by the aid of things not of this world. Therefore, this new art is formed by the combination of specific features of both. Roh writes that Expressionism seems to have already “rejected the image of nature in favor of an exclusively spiritual world.” (Roh 1995, 21). Magical realism, Roh thought, “was situated resolutely between extremes, between vague sensuality and highly structured schematics.” (ibid. 23). The main function of this new art, according to Roh, is filling the gap and exalting the mundane and natural world with intellectual depth and thought.

The ambiguity and vagueness of magical realism is beyond its mere nature or function. This obscurity has been extended to controversial debate regarding who first wrote this kind of narrative work. Angel Flores discusses that the term was coined in 1935 after Borges’ A *Universal History of Infamy*. He is claimed to be the first person to assign the term to books, not just paintings. Luis Leal disagrees with Flores and does not view Borges or Kafka as influential authors in magical realism. Instead, Leal believes that in Hispanic America, Arturo Uslar Pietri should be regarded as the one who promoted magical realism. He wrote *Letras y hombres de Venezuela* (The Literature and Men of Venezuela) in 1948.

In general, regional literature is much indebted to the genre of magical realism as it developed much drastically during the second half of the twentieth century. Meanwhile, magical realism succeeded in leaving tremendous impact on universal story-telling structure and the world's narrative style, including postcolonial literature.

1.2 The Tin Drum

The events of the novel take place in Germany during World War II and are mainly about a legendary and midget character called Oskar Matzerath, born in Danzig. Being endowed with unique idiosyncratic attributes, he is quite cognizant of people's thoughts and their hidden feelings from birth. While still an infant, he hears his parents that decide to give him a drum as his third-year birthday present. He also overhears that he will inherit a small grocery shop, as the family business, when he reaches maturity. At that very moment, little Oskar determines not to grow to maturity and decides to stop growing after receiving the drum on his third birthday. He finds an unusual repose and tranquility with the drum, and this new toy appears to be his favorite method of communication. The novel chronicles Oskar's experience during the war, his defense of a Polish post office against the Germans, and later, his role as an entertainer of German soldiers with a

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troupe of dwarfs. It refers to the story of the Nazi rise to power from the perspective of a gifted but crazed three-year-old character in the name of Oskar.

The characteristic of Oskar Matzerath, as the protagonist and the only fully realized character, resembles a kind of mythical personality that roots in German folk tradition. Since early childhood, he is shown with a rare intellectual skill, quite rational and cognizant that all human existence is as futile as a moth’s search for the flame.\textsuperscript{10}

There seems to be a symbolic and emotional relationship between little Oskar and his drum, and this passionate connection is maintained till his early adulthood. The charm and fascination of the drum is associated with Oskar’s vigor, vitality and liveliness as well as his military attitudes to Nazi Germany. This toy also appears as the symbol of his guilt and he tries to bury it supposing that he can free himself from the numerous social responsibilities that any young man like him should assume. Paradoxically, this symbol is exchanged with another symbol: hump.

At the commencement of the novel the reader has encounters with Oskar’s bizarre memoirs with an exhaustive account of his maternal grandmother, Anna Bronski. Through the versatile technique of wavering perspective, readers see a thirty-year old man at the beginning of the novel who is writing from inside a mental institution in Düsseldorf, Germany, the reasons for which remain unknown to the reader until the end of the book. Having received a toy tin drum from his mother Agnes, he decides voluntarily to stop growing and becoming an adult. Simultaneously, he develops a high-pitched singing voice that he uses to break glasses. He nurtures this talent and uses it frequently in defense of his drum (which he is never without), for breaking, entering, inscribing, as well as for the effect it has on audience. As he gets older, the events in his life impel him to grow.

Since birth, Oskar is quite cognizant of his unusual mental intelligence and therefore, never goes to school during childhood and prefers to remain self-educated, as he believes he has been born with all of his intellectual capacities intact. His mother dies before World War II breaks out, and he weathers the war years in Danzing that is the first city invaded by Germany in the war. When the Polish Post Office is invaded, Oskar is there and narrates all the details of the place where Jan works. Jan’s grudging role in the defense of the post office results in his execution.

The concept of dualism is ubiquitous and pervasive in almost all aspects of the novel. The novel mainly centers round the sense of duality, the doctrine that there are two conflicting powers, good and evil, in the universe.\textsuperscript{11} After reading two books, Rasputin and His Women and Goethe's Elective Affinities, Oskar describes his own two souls as Rasputin and Goethe, initially suggesting

\textsuperscript{10} Being inspired and influenced by the Theatre of the Absurd, Grass believes that life is an activity without purpose, meaning, or unifying principle. He implicitly states that God is dead and that there is a dire need for a New Messiah.

\textsuperscript{11} It is only in the sense of duality that one may claim the novel follows one of the principles of magical realism: hybridity. Hybridity in literature focuses on the outcomes of mixture on one's identity and culture. It is also viewed as the cultural effect of globalization as it requires existence of different indications of other cultures to disclose a deeper and truer facet of reality that conventional realism usually fails to present.
Kasikhan

a contrast. In this way, the inherent and inevitable essence of any human soul, such as conflict between nature and mind, sensuality and morality is displayed by Goethe.

Oskar’s dual character can be discerned form various facets, such as a mythological perspective: the voice of Apollo who persuades him to stay in Danzig, reminding him that the journey might be risky and perilous; and Dionysus who induces him to go and enjoy the fun. Having consulted with them regarding what book to read, Dionysus proposes Rasputin and Apollo offers Goethe. It denotes that he attempts to keep a balance between these two contrasting forces, trying to avoid that any force surpasses or overshadows the other.

It is Goethe who motivates Oskar and inspires him to direct his dualistic nature: “by parodying Goethe’s notion of two souls (Zwei Seelen), Grass suggests that only dark souls dwell in Nazi Germany.” (Nemoto 1993, 35). Grass parodies the nineteenth-century two souls idea and implicitly conveys that only one soul, namely the nasty evil soul, can be found among the Germans living under the reign of National Socialism. In fact, Oskar is drawn by two equal forces of nature and reason, being split between his material desires and spiritual demands.

2. Authorial Reticence

The term is one of the main principles of magical realism that refers to the silence and taciturnity of the writer or narrator in the explanation of magic or description of supernatural events. This element functions as the most distinctive feature of magical realism, distinguishing it from the other contiguous genres, especially fantasy. Based on the nature of this component, the writer should avoid giving comment in admission or rejection, validity or incredibility, accuracy or erroneousness of the world views expressed by the characters in the text. Even few words, explanation regarding the plausibility or reliability of events can harm the overall position of the text as being magical realism and consequently, the supernatural world would be discarded as false testimony. In other words, magic should be respected by both the author, reader, and characters involved, or else it will be degraded into fantasy: “The writer must strongly respect the magic, or else the magic dissolves into simple folk belief or complete fantasy and splits from the real instead of synchronizing with it.”

It is a mixture of realism and fantasy regarded as ordinary daily occurrence or as typical life among the characters. Regardless of the exceptionality and extraordinariness of the subjects, all involved characters should react indifferently and apathetically. Zamora states that “contemporary magical realists write against the illusionism of narrative realism by heightening their own narrative investment in illusion.” (Zamora 1995, 501).

Reticence functions as a criterion defining the very existence of magical realism. The author should refuse to judge on the veracity and the authenticity of the characters’ world-views. The author’s comment regarding the validity of his world-view would “relegate the supernatural to a secondary mode of being (the unreliable imagination of a character), and thus the juxtaposition of

12 See <http://www.ou.edu/cls/reference/journal1.html>
two mutually exclusive logical codes, which is essential to magical realism, would become a hierarchy.”13 (Cooper 1998, 34).

Consequently, in magical realism the unreal should be accepted as real by both the reader and the characters in the story; otherwise, it may fall into the genre of fantasy.

2.1 Authorial Reticence in Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s One Hundred Years of Solitude

Considering the fact that in magical realism the unreal should be accepted and respected as real by both readers and characters in the story, Marquez follows an attitude of neutrality and indifference toward the magic and supernatural events that permeate the novel.

In the most crucial moment of the massacre, when the authorities deny the blood bath of more than three thousand demonstrators, the author neither approves, nor refutes the event. Aureliano Babilonia as one of the few survivors of the Massacre insists on repeating his eyewitness account of the death of more than three thousand demonstrators until the day he dies. In his last words to Aureliano Babilonia, he says: “Always remember that there were more than three thousand and that they threw them in the sea.” (Marquez 2006, 364). The massacre had been denied both by the locals and by the authorities: “In Macondo nothing has happened, nor is anything happening now, nor will it ever.” (ibid. 321). Then all history and all memory were comprehensively blotted out by the rain which lasted four years, eleven months and two days that recalls the event known as plague of insomnia.

The ascending moment of Remedios in to heaven is another example of the author’s silence when he avoids expressing his idea whether or not such an event is real or credible: “it was no longer four o’clock in the afternoon, before they were lost forever with her in the upper atmosphere where not even the highest-flying birds of memory could reach her.” (ibid. 247).

That Garcia Marquez records the time of the day (four o’clock) infuses the event with a specificity that, he implies, can only make the ascension of Remedios real. Marquez displays authorial reticence, advancing the story as if nothing extraordinary has ever happened. However, he exaggerates the details of her beauty in order to draw another conclusion: that the effect of some people on others sometimes remains a mystery. These exaggerations are not merely focused on her beauty, but include her rationality, unique manner, discernment, magic odor and divine protection. Here are some examples:

Remedios the Beauty “is not a creature of this world.” She wanders “naked through the house because her nature rejected all manner of convention.” She is so profound in her understanding of what is important that Colonel Aureliano Buendia says, “It's as if she's come back from twenty years of war.” (Marquez 2006, 207). A man who falls to his death admiring her beauty dies with the smothering odor of Remedios the Beauty on his skin: “It was so deep in his

13 On the other hand, Chanady expostulates in bewilderment how magical realist authors – who are inherently educated literary men living in an age which clearly distinguishes between reality and fantasy – can potentially believe and focus on unreliability.
body that the cracks in his skull did not give off blood but amber-colored oil that was impregnated with that secret perfume.” So intoxicating is this woman that her smell keeps on “torturing men beyond death, right down to the dust of their bones.” (ibid. 244). A gentle touch on her body results in a heart-rending death as if the very gods were protecting her, as if her beauty were holy and sacred. After a man boasts of his audacity, “the kick of a horse crushed his chest and a crowd of outsiders saw him die in the middle of the street, drowned in his own bloody vomiting.” (ibid. 245).

The dying scene of Jose Arcadio and the flow of his blood when he is shot is another example of authorial reticence because Marquez never comments, nor does he express his feelings about it. In this scene a trickle of blood is shown coming out from under the door that crosses the living room, goes out into the street, continues on in a straight line, goes down the steps and climbs over the curbs, passes along the Street, turns to the different directions from right to left or conversely, crosses through the parlor, hugs the walls so as not to stain the carpets, goes to the living room and after a wide curve to avoid the dining-room table it goes along the porch with the begonias, and passes invisibly under Amaranta’s chair as she is teaching Aureliano Jose, and then goes through the pantry and comes out in the kitchen where Ursula is getting ready to bake bread.14

Even after his death, the gunpowder smell never left the corpse, not even after it is placed hermetically in a special coffin that is “reinforced inside with iron plates and fastened together with steel bolts.” (ibid. 146). The cemetery smells of powder for years; it dissipates only when the sinister banana company, United Fruit, covers over Jose Arcadio’s grave with a shell of concrete. Meanwhile, Marquez keeps quiet and avoids giving any comment. He never shows his characters fantastically; they are depicted as commonplace and ordinary people. The material for his magic realism, according to Williams, “is akin to Roh's original idea, relating to everyday life.” (Williams 1999, 78).

3. Paucity and Momentariness

Since magic is naturally hidden and requires being discovered, it cannot appear repeatedly at any time one wishes; therefore, it comes into sight at merely rare occasions. I name this feature of magical realism paucity or scarcity that indicates extraordinary events should not occur incessantly or frequently. Being used frequently, magic becomes stale and clichéd, and that through repeated exposure, its novelty wears off.

The second conclusion one may draw out of Roh’s statement regarding the hidden and occult nature of magic, is that it should happen momentarily and unprompted, and consequently it cannot be controllable. Magic in magical realism manipulates Man’s life only momentarily and vanishes promptly.

14 See Marquez 2006, 140
3.1 Paucity & Momentariness in Marquez’s One Hundred Years of Solitude

In all supernatural events explained in Marquez’s novel (ranging from the existence of ghosts, clairvoyance, levitations of Father Nicanor Reyna, resurrections, telepathy, the rain of tiny yellow flowers, the amazing fecundity of animals, up to the enchanted regions, amazing rainfall, and cataclysmic windstorm …etc), one feels that magic does not appear at any time one wishes, and that it comes into sight at merely rare occasions. Magical events do not happen incessantly or frequently and are not downgraded through repeated exposure. Furthermore, these events happen momentarily and unprompted and are therefore uncontrollable. Magic in this novel manipulates Man’s life momentarily and vanishes instantaneously.

In Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s One Hundred Years of Solitude, two elements of paucity and momentariness are implicitly used, but not named or referred to by commentators. Detailed scrutiny on the novel denotes how well these two elements are employed. Strange events scarcely occur (paucity), are seldom repeated and are originally uncontrollable happening just in a short period of time (momentariness).

In my opinion, Father Nicanor Reyna's levitation is one of the most memorable and outstanding parts of the novel: “Now we shall witness an undeniable proof of the infinite power of God.” An acolyte brings him “a cup of thick and steaming chocolate, which he drank without pausing to breathe.” Father Reyna then closes his eyes and rises “six inches above the level of the ground.” (Marquez 2006, 95).

Regardless of the so-called anti-religious message that this scene may have, and heedless of whether or not Marquez really intended to implicitly deride God’s miracles, one notices that the levitation of Father Reyna occurs just once throughout the novel and that it happens unexpectedly. This is one of the most controversial scenes that raised much debate among the commentators. Mellon comments: “That it takes hot chocolate to accomplish this feat thematically allows Garcia Marquez to poke fun at the entire notion of God and His miracles.” (Mellen 2000, 68).

Readers perfectly know that neither hot chocolate, nor any other kind of drink can cause levitation. Perhaps the reason why Marquez chose the simplest form of drink (i.e. chocolate) is to deride and mock God’s miracles.

The ascending moment of Remedios the Beautiful to heaven while she was hanging sheets on the line is another example in which one may discern the application of paucity and momentariness. In this scene, she is shown flying up to sky while trying to hang sheets on the rope in a windy and stormy afternoon. On the one hand, Marquez’s reticence advances the story as if nothing extraordinary has ever happened; and on the other, the reader apprehends that such a bewildering and astonishing event (i.e. flying up to sky) does not occur to any other characters, nor

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15 According to Mellen, at one point Garcia Marquez considered making the liquid Coca-cola.
Kasikhan

does it happen at a slow pace. Everything takes place in an extremely short space of time and never gets repeated.

Moreover, in the dying scene of Jose Arcadio and the incredible smooth flow of his blood throughout the streets of Macondo when he is shot, one can detect and recognize the application of paucity and momentariness. In this incident the reader realizes that such a scene is never repeated in the rest of the novel, nor was it repeated before (paucity). One also finds out that flowing blood moved along streets within a short span of time and quite promptly (momentariness).

4. Authorial Reticence, Paucity & Momentariness in Gunter Grass's The Tin Drum

Despite the abundance of extraordinary and uncanny events throughout the novel which have made commentators erroneously assume it as a work of magical realism, the present article aims to prove that Grass’s *The Tin Drum* is devoid of the author’s silence and taciturnity when one confronts magic or supernatural events. In most circumstances, the narrator/character tries to provide explanations for the incredible events he or she faces. It should be noted that any attempt in justification of extraordinary events, destabilizes and undermines the overall position of the text as being magical realism and consequently, readers doubt the validity and accuracy of the statements expressed by the characters. As Faris explains:

In the magical realist texts …, the supernatural is not a simple or obvious matter, but it is an ordinary matter, an everyday occurrence – admitted, accepted, and integrated into the rationality and materiality of literary realism. Magic is no longer quixotic madness, but normative and normalizing. (Faris 1995, 3).

In most parts of the novel, the reader faces bewildering and perplexing events beyond human logic and rationalization. In fact, one can detect sufficient examples and excerpts in justification of this claim that this novel cannot be classified under the mode of magical realism. For instance, when Oskar is three years old, he decides, in an act of demonic will, not to grow any taller or to develop physically. Already convinced of his intellectual superiority and disgusted by petit-bourgeois German society, he chooses to remain the size of a child and lets others perceive him as a freak. Here, the main point is that Oskar knows and is quite aware that nobody will believe his pause in physical growth as a natural or matter-of-fact reality. Therefore, he devises a plan so that his physical deficiency seems rational and appears medically justified. It is indispensable to emphasize again that in magical realism any unusual or inexplicable event should be accepted as a matter-of-fact reality.

Being worried of Oskar's health, his mother constantly takes him to doctors to find out the reason of her son's physical deficiency. In other words, she is in quest of uncovering the logical and medical reason of what made Oskar remain a dwarf when he was three years old; and many years later, what made him resume the growth. Therefore, unlike magical realist fiction in which doubt and justification of extraordinary events are not permitted, one sees sustained hesitation in
Oskar’s close relatives. On the other hand, if it were a normal event, Oskar’s doctor would never write a lengthy article to be published in medical journals and ask other doctors to help him understand what the reason of this deficiency might be. The hasty, anxious and surprising reactions of characters suffice to prove that none has believed such events as matter-of-fact realities.

In fantasy, known as the most contiguous genre to magical realism, neither readers nor characters believe marvelous events as real or credible phenomena. Consequently, they express their wonders quite evidently and ostensibly. In contrast to the principles of magical realism, in which “the unreal happens as a part of reality...” (Leal 1995, 119), and that both the reader and characters of the novel must accept the unreal as real, Oskar’s glass-shattering scream is interpreted as something unique and exceptional followed by surprise and applause. Elsewhere, Oskar is tempted to show the marvelous power of his voice admired and applauded by audience. Consequently, being surprised of Oskar’s incredible power of voice, the Dusters offer him the membership of the group. The point is here: had the Dusters not been astonished by Oskar's power, would they have ever invited him to join the group? Such bewilderments are not expressed just one or two times. They occurred incessantly and appeared as sustained hesitation. Some years later, when Oskar decides to stop remaining a dwarf and physically grow again, the same people of his family exclaim their amazement and bewilderment. Contrary to one of the principles of magical realism, once again doctors attempt to find rational reasons or logical explanations for this unusual physical growth. Even Oskar’s close relatives try to find reasons for the resumption of his growth. Such sustained hesitations indicate that his friends and relatives never admitted unusual events as matter-of-fact realities.

Grass’s techniques of moving back and forth in time, mixing fantasy and reality, as well as Oskar’s narrating unreliably confuse the readers. As Noel L. Thomas remarks about the novel’s protagonist, “Oskar speaks the language of doubt; the metaphorical language …” (qtd. in Marston William 1997, 1). In contradiction to Faris’s statement that within the framework of magical realism wonders should be narrated without comment, or in a matter-of-fact way as a child would accept them, without unnecessary questioning or query; readers remain dubious and suspicious of Oskar’s narration and feel the need to verify the accuracy and validity of his words. Such state of doubt and indecisiveness is much intensified by the fusion of reality and unreality. Readers’ doubt and hesitation is partly engendered by wavering perspective of the narrator that multiplies this state of uncertainty. For instance, when he describes the peephole he says that the warden Bruno, an obtuse eccentric, keeps a constant watch through a peephole in the door. And yet, Oskar refutes this by insisting that he himself is sometimes in front of the peephole.

16 The name of a band or group of young boys in the novel, committing aggressive actions enthusiastically and extravagantly.
17 His new growth is ascribed to the blow on the head and his heavy fall in the empty grave.
sometimes behind it. Lack of exact situation of characters, their contradictory statements, as well as their inconsistent viewpoints add to the already existing dubiousness.

Not only does the novel lack authorial reticence and is based on sustained hesitation, but also in certain circumstances, it lacks a unified narrative structure. The multiple structural forms of the novel makes the events seem and sound more blurred as one approaches the end. In other words, as the story progresses and moves forward, the fundamental principles and characters' status become more vague and unclear:

There is a distinctive Lewis Carrollish kind of effect in Grass's first novel: instead of things becoming clearer, the further you penetrate into the book, they in fact appear to take on an ever more dislocated and obscure aspect. (Kampchen 2001, 46).

Sometimes such vagueness and ambiguity is manifested in a story-telling style. At the end of the First Book, the narrative style changes into that of fairy-tale, a series of sentences beginning with the childish, fairy-tale Once upon a time.... It seems that constant repetition of this phrase (i.e. once upon a time...) at the beginning of each sentence sows the seeds of doubt and hesitation in the reader, wondering if the events of the story have actually occurred in a realistic world. He or she fails to make a clear distinction between reality and unreality, what is true, and what seems to be true.

There are various sources contributing to the readers' uncertainty, for instance, their hesitation is partly derived from Oskar’s unique mental faculty which to a great extent is different from that of others. He is one of those infants whose mental development is already complete at birth. He can hear, see, and think like an adult from the moment he is born. These unique potentials have made Oskar an alien and stranger. As an exceptional child, he devises a plan to be exempted from conforming to the norms and conventions of the society. Yet, his intelligence and perspicuity allow him to stand mentally above adults and enable him to analyze their motivations. He looks at them from below and from two perspectives: both as a child and as an adult. Such capabilities permit him to stand far beyond others and help the readers' hesitation gets deeper.

Once again it seems indispensable to remember that in the world of magical realism, all events and characters should appear normal and consequently, no explanation is needed because no one doubts the accuracy of unusual events or unique characters he or she comes across. In other words, the reader should accept everything shown or told to him or her.

Roh has repeatedly emphasized that in the realistic world we live in, mystery is hidden and requires being discovered. This idea forms the fundamental basis of magical realism: “with the word magic, as opposed to mystic, I wished to indicate that the mystery does not descend to the represented world, but rather hides and palpitates behind it.” (Roh 1995, 15).

Roh's statement is noteworthy and remarkable as two conclusions can be drawn out of it: first, since magic is hidden and needs being discovered, it cannot appear repeatedly at any time one wishes; and therefore, it comes into sight only in rare occasions. I have called this feature of
magical realism as paucity or scarcity, indicating that extraordinary events should not occur incessantly or frequently. Whereas, in this novel Oskar uses his marvelous power of glass-shattering scream not once or twice, but quite repeatedly almost throughout the novel, so much so that it becomes a part of his profession, and hence he is offered a job. Had his capabilities not been strange or unusual to the others, he would have never been offered the job.

In this novel, Oskar is seen misusing his magic power to find out how much people are vulnerable to the temptation of theft.\textsuperscript{19} Frequent use of Oskar's vocal magic power, in my opinion, seems to be degraded into a weapon which he uses for self-defense or for mere amusement. The point is that if Oskar’s magic scream were so accessible to be used at any time and for any trivial purposes (even for personal amusement), it would be definitely wrong to consider it magic, as magic occurs rarely.

Furthermore, the concept of momentariness can be derived from Roh’s statement emphasizing the hidden and occult aspect of magic that should happen momentarily and promptly; and consequently, should not be controllable, intruding into our lives from the outside world. Magic in magical realism manipulates man’s life momentarily and vanishes promptly. Whereas, in this novel, this magic power is used both frequently and at any time Oskar wishes. Had his power been purely magic, it should have occurred rarely and could have never been used intermittently for even insignificant purposes as misleading others.

Throughout the novel one easily notices Oskar's deliberate intention to stop his physical growth when he is three years old and resume it again willingly some years later. Meanwhile, he can easily avail of his glass-shattering scream for various purposes: in both trivial and significant occasions. It denotes that his magical power is quite in his control. Definitely, such a controlled magic, being devoid of originality and genuineness – that is indispensable for the concept of magic in magical realism – acts merely as an instrument. Concept of magic, in my opinion, is vitiated, undermined and impaired in this novel, as what one faces is a kind of controllable magic, appearing knowingly and frequently.

Oskar's words reveal his dual character when he confesses that he had never been a child and therefore, needs to pretend childish behavior.\textsuperscript{19} This fact undermines the genuineness or originality of his magic power, denoting that his dwarf physique has never been \textit{intrinsically} magic, because it is blended with deceit and false pretension. The fact is that Oskar, during all these years, only plays the role of a dwarf; deceiving others by the aid of a controllable device, called magic.

\textsuperscript{18} Oskar breaks the windows of jeweler shops from far distance by the aid of his magic voice to examine the reaction of pedestrians who pass by the shops.

\textsuperscript{19} See Grass 2009, 67
5. Conclusion

Unlike García Márquez who doesn’t allow magic being identified as fantastic, and contrary to his belief that magic retains a highly elevated status, in Grass’s *The Tin Drum*, the concept of magic, in my opinion, is vitiated, undermined and impaired, as what one faces is a kind of controllable magic, appearing frequently and completely at Oskar’s will. Definitely, such a controlled magic, being devoid of originality and genuineness – that is indispensable for the concept of magic in magical realism – merely acts as an instrument. The kind of magic employed in this novel lacks paucity and momentariness. Not only does it occur frequently, but it also lasts for a long time. And unlike Roh’s opinion that considers an elevated position for magic, it is merely used for trivial purposes such as cheating or deceit.

Moreover, unlike Gabriel García Márquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in which uncanny events are never followed with doubt or surprise (authorial reticence), the hypernormal events in Gunter Grass’s *The Tin Drum* are accompanied by sustained hesitation, wonder, disbelief and constant questioning that harm the principle of authorial reticence, as logical explanations or rational justifications are frequently demanded by characters involved in *The Tin Drum*.
Magical Realism and Lack of Authorial Reticence in Gunter Grass’s The Tin Drum with reference to Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s One Hundred Years of solitude

الواقعية السحرية وعدم "صمت المؤلف"

في
رواية الطبل الصفيح لغونتر غراس
بالإشارة إلى
رواية مائة عام من العزلة لغابرييل غارسيا ماركيز

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الخلاصة

هذه المقالة تعرض بعض المميزات البارزة لأسلوب الواقعية السحرية وهما "صمت المؤلف" ومفهوم "التردد" لاتباث
رواية "الطبل الصفيح" للكاتب غونتر غراس لا يمكن وضعها ضمن هذا الأسلوب على الرغم من دعوات بعض الناشرين.
المنهجية المتبعة في هذه المقالة تعتزم أساساً على " القراءة عن كتب " والمقارنة مع رواية "مائة عام من العزلة"
لغيابرييل غارسيا ماركيز وتقدم نماذج من نص الروايتين.

فاضلاً عن ذلك تقدم هذه المقالة عناصر اكتشافاً حديثاً من الواقعية السحرية وهما "الندرة" ول"اللحظية" والذان استلهما
من مقوله فرانتز رو الشهيرة عن طبيعة السحر الخفافة المختبئة في العالم المحيط بها.
وفي الختام يستخلص أن رواية "الطبل الصفيح" لغونتر غراس لا تعارض "التردد" ول"اللحظية" حسب واسم ترفض
أيضاً "صمت المؤلف" صراحة على عكس رواية "مائة عام من العزلة" لماركيز الذي حافظ بشكل تاريخ على هذه الميزالة
احتفاظاً دائماً، لأن بطل الرواية يحاول جاهداً تقديم إيضاحات عقلانية وميزات منطقية لكل ما يقوم به.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الواقعية السحرية، صمت المؤلف، الترد والتمدد، الندرة، اللمحة
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178
Magical Realism and Lack of Authorial Reticence in Gunter Grass’s The Tin Drum with reference to Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s One Hundred Years of solitude


Kasikhan

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